

Multiplayer by **TheMikeWheelers** (jasongracefully)

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Summary:

Video game nights are when things get particularly competitive for Mike and El.

Multiplayer

“You're prettier.”

It all started with that. It had just slipped out of Mike's mouth, he didn't know what it was going to lead to.

He was 16 years old, calling his girlfriend pretty wasn't exactly something out of the ordinary for Mike. He truly believed that Eleven was the most beautiful girl in the world, and he never hesitated to tell her that.

But today was different.

It had become one of his famous game nights. His friends and El would come over on the first Saturday of every month, they played on his Atari in a series of epic competitions to see who would win.

They had been doing this for years now, ever since the Christmas of 1984. Both Dustin and Will had their own Ataris, and Mike had practically begged his mother for one. She eventually gave in and he dubbed that day their first game night. Even after all these years it was a tradition, but the tone of the games was no longer the same.

The bets started as a joke when they were 14, Dustin had asked El to bet a box of Eggos on the game, and after that their bets were uncontrollable. As bets grew, the five teenagers became more and more competitive.

Mike and El were up first, and that to begin with was out of the ordinary. Normally they hated playing against each other, rather playing in teams or cheering the other on from the sides. But today they wanted to see, who was the better player? Who would finally be able to beat the other?

El was just picking out her character, Mike didn't have any idea or strategy. He was just tuning out, watching as she got lost in thought, finally landing on a princess character.

“Pretty,” Mike heard her mumble. She wasn't talking to anyone in

particular, just to herself, but then he let it slip out.

“You're prettier.”

Her neck almost snapped as she turned to face him as quick as lightning. He could feel the redness making its way down his neck. A great way to start the competition-- by getting distracted and complimenting his opponent.

El's cheeks had turned a light shade of pink, nowhere close to the ruby of Mike's face, but he could easily see her slight blush.

Mike swore he heard Lucas behind them whisper, “Ten bucks they kiss within five minutes,” but he elected to ignore that.

El continued to stare at him, as though she needed a minute to determine her response. Mike waited on edge, ready for her to laugh and joke that she was going to beat him, then make him blush even more. Instead she surprised him.

“You have the cutest freckles.”

It took Mike a second to process what she had just said. Had she really just complimented his freckles? It wasn't as if it was the first time. Whenever they cuddled she always loved to run her finger along his cheeks, attempting to count the freckles, to connect the dotted stars into constellations across his beet-red face.

However, it was not like El to compliment him so openly, so publically. Even after years of speech therapy and learning new words, she was a generally quiet person. Especially compared to the boys, she barely spoke amongst their constant chatter.

When she did talk, she most definitely never said anything so personal, so emotional. There weren't many people she was comfortable showing her emotions in front of, and while she trusted the boys unconditionally, their teasing of her and Mike for years both before and after they officially started dating had made them both prefer to keep their sentiments of love in private.

If they were alone and talking to each other, it would be completely ordinary for El to compliment something like that to Mike. But they

weren't alone nor talking to each other. They were surrounded by their friends, and in this moment they were enemies, preparing for battle.

That's when it hit Mike.

She thought he called her pretty to throw her off, to distract her from putting all her focus into the game. And Mike grinned thinking about her response, she had decided that two could play at that game, she could do it right back to him.

Well, Mike hadn't meant to start a war, but now they were fighting.

"Have I ever told you that you have the cutest nose?"

His sudden interruption of the silence seemed to catch the boys attention. El smirked, a slight blush on her cheeks, but she wasn't backing down.

"You have the nicest eyes," She countered, not even realizing she had broke into a grin, and she was slowly inching up closer to Mike. Part of him wondered if this was a challenge. Was this movement meant to intimidate him? Was it supposed to let him know she wasn't going to let up?

What Mike didn't realize though, was El hadn't even the slightest idea she was getting closer to him. It was all instincts, and her habit to want to get closer to him when she was happy.

Mike wanted to come off as cool and confident as she did, but instead he was a blushing wreck. Taking a gulp, he stammered, "You have the softest hair."

He leaned over and picked up a strand of her long, dark hair. It was resting on her shoulder, and Mike pushed himself closer to her, hovering only inches from her face. Picking up the lock of hair, he twirled it for a moment, staring into her eyes. He completely forgot about the boys behind them until he heard the familiar noises of Dustin's snickering and Will clearing his throat.

He dropped the piece of her hair and sat back to his original position. He proudly displayed a smug grin, knowing he'd won that battle at

least. El couldn't form a response, with her blush now as red as his, and she refused to meet his eyes. Making Mike blush was easy, he did it almost every time he thought of Eleven, but making El blush was a different story. She wasn't embarrassed by the teasing or the PDA like he was, and it took a lot to get her to blush. Making El blush was an accomplishment, and Mike was proud of his victory as he watched her stammer to find words.

“Ready to play?” He asked her innocently. She stared daggers at him, and little did he know she was plotting her revenge. She was not going to let him win, that she was sure of.

The game began, and Mike instantly pushed his mind into it. He completely tuned out the cheers and boos from the boys behind him, nor the debates whether he or El would win. He was determined to win this game, he wouldn't let anything take away his focus.

However, there was one thing that did take away his focus. He couldn't help but notice the little amount of effort El was putting in. It was completely unlike her and honestly, it was unsettling for Mike. He knew she had a plan.

He tried to ignore it, maybe she was just having an off day, but he couldn't shake the idea that there was a reason he was winning so easily.

The truth was El did have a plan, a plan that she was so sure would work, she didn't need to focus on little things in the beginning of the game, because by the end it would be completely up to her.

The game waged on and Mike continued to try his best to ignore El, focusing on nothing but winning the game.

But then something took his attention away.

He was so close to winning, seconds away from sweet, sweet victory, but then he felt it happen.

El had dropped her controller and had practically jumped onto Mike, placing a big kiss onto his cheek.

It took Mike several seconds to comprehend what had happened, but

by then El had already jumped up and grabbed her controller, claiming victory for herself.

Meanwhile Mike stood there, blushing and dumbfounded. He got angry with himself, he should have seen it coming. He was so close to winning, but he let himself get distracted.

Mike couldn't complain much about the distraction, though. Every time he felt El's lips on him it was as if the Sun had exploded within his chest. He was struck with a warmth all throughout his body, and no matter how many times she kissed him, he continued to feel blown away every time.

Normally, he would have fought a thousand soldiers, travel a million miles, just so he could feel her kiss him. However this time, his mouth was too busy gaping open, in shock of how easily he was tricked.

El gave him a similar smug smile to the one he had given her just minutes previously. His mouth was ajar, still letting it all be processed. She had just kissed him to distract him from the game, and it worked! She had won, and she gave him a slight wink that told him she wouldn't be letting him forget it anytime soon.

"Y-you cheated!" Mike stuttered out.

El just looked over at him, turning away from the high five Dustin tried to give her. She edged closer to Mike and grabbed his hand, something they normally did to reassure and comfort the other, but now Mike realized she was just teasing him.

"I'm pretty sure it's only cheating if I kiss someone else."

"Besides dude," Lucas spoke up at Mike's bewilderment, "She does that at least 18 times a day. If you lose because of it then I think that's your fault."

Mike wanted to let out a whiny, "But still," but stopped himself, instead just letting his ruby blush deepen when El kissed his cheek one more time.

"I demand a rematch then," He spoke up, "Come on, one more

match,” He raised his eyebrows to El, “Unless you think I'm gonna beat you this time.”

El wasn't about to let him take away her victory, so she gave him a grin, “Fine, rematch. Winner gets a kiss.” They had started their kiss bets years earlier. While the other boys insisted on betting comics, Mike and El came up with their own system of bets. It was their way of feeling the victory of the bet, but in the end neither of them really lost.

“You're on.”

The game restarted and they were off. This time was more intense, now not only were honor and victory on the line, but the kiss as well.

They got intense while playing, the effort El lacked putting in before had now arrived, and it was a close match. Either of them could win, it was too close to tell for sure.

Desperate times called for desperate measures. Mike figured, if El could do it why couldn't he? So he decided to steal a page out of her book, leaning in to give her a taste of her own medicine. Kissing her wouldn't distract her like it did to him, but hopefully it would take her mind off the game for the couple seconds he needed to win.

Little did he know, however, that he wasn't the only one trying to distract the other. El decided to replay her tactic, leaning in as well.

With the fast-paced game, both of the teens were quick to lean in and place what they hoped would be their winning move. Both assumed the other would be there to land on, so when they both jumped forward for the kiss at the same time, they ended up completely missing each other, landing face down on the floor.

It took them each a second to process what had happened. How they both moved out of the way so they could kiss the other, and now they were lying on the ground, and the game was yet to declare a victor.

Almost instantly, Mike and El sprung up, desperately feeling around to find their controllers. However their motivation was short lived,

when they saw the flashing 'GAME OVER' that was being displayed on the screen. In the end they both distracted the other, neither of them won.

They stared at the screen for several seconds, mouths open in shock. It wasn't until they heard the giggling behind them that they turned around.

"So tell me," Dustin spoke through his cackling, "Why did we let them play each other?"

"Well it's a lot more entertaining than watching you and Will," Lucas countered.

"I- I- what?" Mike stuttered out.

"You both lost, too caught up with making out with each other, the time ran out," Dustin laughed at their expressions.

El groaned and Mike just stammered, "W- we were not making out!" His face was cherry-red.

Will cut him off, "Whatever, I've got 5 bucks on a game with Lucas so it's our turn now."

The two boys came to grab the controllers from them, while Mike and El went to take over their seats on the couch.

"So if we both lost, then who won the bet?" El asked him, with a glint in her eye.

Mike smirked at her, "Well since we tied, I guess we both get that kiss."

"Sounds like a plan."

She put her hands on his cheeks and leaned in, pecking him on the lips for just a second, until they were interrupted by the familiar groan from Dustin next to them.

El pulled away, "Can't wait to win against you next time."

“We’ll see,” Mike rolled his eyes, “Maybe I have a few tricks to use too.”

“Another kiss bet?” She gave him a small smirk before turning away, staring forward at Lucas and Will, deeply engrossed in their own battle.

“You're on.”